

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD SUMMARY

Thursday, February 8, 2001

SENATE

Measure Introduced:

S. 288. A bill to extend the moratorium enacted by the Internet Tax Freedom Act through 2006, and encourage States to simplify their sales and use taxes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Wyden

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Committee Meetings:

Committee on the Budget: Committee concluded hearings to examine certain budgetary issues, including the projected federal budget surpluses and tax reduction initiatives, and their impact on the economic outlook of the United States.

Committee on the Judiciary: *Committee concluded hearings on bankruptcy reform issues, including related provisions of S. 220, to amend title 11, United States Code, after receiving testimony from Chief Judge Edward R. Becker, United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit; Judge Randall J. Newsome, United States Bankruptcy Court, Northern District of California.*

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Committee held hearings to examine the effectiveness of the new Department of Health and Human Services regulations that maintain the privacy of personal health information in the face of advanced information technology and the increasing number of access to identifiable health information.

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Congressional Program Ahead, Week of February 12 through February 17, 2001:

Committee on the Judiciary: 2/13/01 @ 10:00 a.m. Business meeting to consider pending calendar business, SD-226.

Committee on the Judiciary: 2/14/01 @ 10:00 a.m. Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the impact of recent pardons granted by President Clinton, SD- 226.

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HOUSE

Bills Introduced:

H.R. 2. A bill to establish a procedure to safeguard the combined surpluses of the Social Security and Medicare hospital insurance trust funds; referred to the Committee on Rules, and in addition to the Committee on the Budget, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

Herger

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Bills Introduced (Cont-d.):

H.R. 526. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act, the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to protect consumers in managed care plans and other health coverage; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Education and the Workforce, and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

Ganske

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H.R. 534. A bill to establish a grant program that provides incentives for States to enact mandatory minimum sentences for certain firearms offenses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Crenshaw

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H.R. 536. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act and Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to require that group and individual health insurance coverage and group health plans provide coverage for a minimum hospital stay for mastectomies and lymph node dissections performed for the treatment of breast cancer; referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

DeLauro

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H.R. 537. *A bill to establish the National Commission on Youth Crime and School Violence; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.*

Granger

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H.R. 541. A bill to amend chapter 35 of title 44, United States Code, popularly known as the Paperwork Reduction Act, to minimize the burden of Federal paperwork demands upon small businesses, educational and nonprofit institutions, Federal contractors, State and local governments, and other persons through the sponsorship and use of alternative information technologies; to the Committee on Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on Small Business, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

Kelly

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H.R. 542. A bill to amend provisions of law enacted by the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 to ensure full analysis of potential impacts on small entities of rules proposed by certain agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Small Business, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

Kelly

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H.R. 544. A bill to require the Attorney General to promulgate regulations relating to gender-related persecution, including female genital mutilation, for use in determining an alien's eligibility for asylum or withholding of removal; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Maloney

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Bills Introduced (Cont-d.):

H.J. Res. 14. *A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States*

regarding regulations on the amounts of expenditures of personal funds made by candidates for election for public office; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Leach

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H. Con. Res. 23. A Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of the Congress that President George W. Bush should declare to all nations that the United States does not intend to assent to or ratify the International Criminal Court Treaty, also referred to as the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and the signature of former President Clinton to that treaty should not be construed otherwise; to the Committee on International Relations.

Paul

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Committee Resignations:

Committee on Government Reform:

Read a letter from Mr. Flake wherein he announced his resignation from the Committee on Government Reform.

Read a letter from Mr. Ford wherein he announced his resignation from the Committee on Government Reform.

International Relations and Judiciary:

Read a letter from Mr. Rothman wherein he announced his resignation from the Committee on International Relations and the Committee on the Judiciary.

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Committee Election--Majority Members:

The House agreed to H. Res. 32, designating majority membership on the following standing committees of the House of Representatives:

Committee on Government Reform: *Mr. Weldon of Florida, Mr. Cannon of Utah, Mr. Putnam of Florida, Mr. Otter of Idaho, and Mr. Schrock of Virginia.*

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: *Mr. Pombo of California and Mr. Hayes of North Carolina to rank after Mr. Isakson of Georgia.*

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Committee Election--Minority Members:

The House agreed to H. Res. 33, designating minority membership on the following standing committees of the House of Representatives:

Committee on Government Reform: *Mr. Clay of Missouri.*

Committee on the Judiciary: *Mr. Schiff of California.*

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Committee Meetings:

Committee on Government Reform: Held a hearing on ~~A~~The Controversial Pardon of International Fugitive

Marc Rich.@ Prior to the hearing, the Committee met for organizational purposes. The Committee approved an Oversight Plan for the 107th Congress.

Committee on the Judiciary: *Concluded hearings on H.R. 333, Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act of 2001.*

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Congressional Program Ahead, Week of February 12 through February 17, 2001:

Committee on the Judiciary: 2/14/01 and 2/15/01 @ 10:00 a.m. To mark up the following bills: H.R. 333, Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act of 2001; and H.R. 256, to extend for 11 additional months the period for which chapter 12 of title 11 of the United States Code is reenacted, 2141 Rayburn.

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Remarks:

Commending Federal Judge J. Robert Elliott Upon His Retirement.

*A...U.S. Judge J. Robert Elliott [] retired this December at age 91 from the U.S. Federal Court in Columbus making him the **longest-serving judge in the Federal Courts' history**. During this long career, he was faced with many difficult and politically charged cases. [] Through it all he developed a profound respect for the absolute necessity of distinguishing between right and wrong, the value of hard work, the importance of common sense, and the indispensable nature of the rule of law in a free society. [] Judge Elliott worked 51 weeks a year for almost four decades on the bench. He did all of his own research and writing, unlike many other Federal judges who rely on law clerks. [] Throughout his life, but especially during his four decades on the federal bench, **Judge J. Robert Elliott** has been a credit to his native state of Georgia, and the community of Columbus. His departure is our loss...@*

Collins

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Introduction Of Project Exile: The Safe Streets And Neighborhoods Act Of 2001.

Crenshaw

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Preventing Wasteful Federal Boondoggles.

A...the Orlando Sentinel published a headline yesterday saying >Anger Over Courthouse Won't Die.= The anger concerns a proposed \$60,000,000 Federal courthouse in Orlando that the judges are unhappy with. I have been told by an expert that to build what the judges want could potentially double the cost and send several million dollars in architect's fees down the drain. At \$60 million, the building will already cost \$195 a square foot. The cost is already too high. If costs explode because of spoiled judges, it will be far too expensive to build if we have any consideration at all for the poor taxpayers who are footing the bill. Too many times we have allowed Federal judges to demand Taj Mahal- type courthouses because the money is not coming out of their pockets. Too often they have a taxpayers-be-damned attitude. The Commissioner for Public Buildings said, >The problem here is we have some judges who think they should be architects.= Mr. Speaker, I hope the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, Hazardous Materials and Pipeline Transportation of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on which I served for 10 years will not let this project become another wasteful Federal boondoggle.@

Duncan

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Remarks (Cont-d.):

Potential for War.

A...The ill-conceived drug war of the past 30 years has caused great harm to our society. It has undermined privacy and challenged the constitutional rights of all our citizens. The accelerated attack on drug usage seen since the early 1970s has not resulted in any material benefit. Over \$300 billion has been spent on this war, and we are less free and poorer because of it. Civil liberties are sacrificed in all wars, both domestic and foreign. It is clear that even if it were a legitimate function for Government to curtail drug usage, eliminating bad habits through Government regulation is not achievable. [] There are 10 times the number of prisoners for drug offenses than there were in 1980, and 80 percent of the drug arrests are for nonviolent possession. In spite of all the money spent and energy wasted, drug usage continues at a record pace. Some day we must wake up and realize the Federal drug war is a farce, it has failed, and we must change our approach. As bad as drug addiction is and the harm it causes, it is minuscule compared to the dollar cost, the loss of liberty and social conflict that results from our ill-advised drug war. Mandatory drug sentencing have done a great deal of harm by limiting the discretion that judges could use in sentencing victims in this drug war. Congress should repeal or change these laws just as we found it beneficial to modify seizure and for forfeiture laws 2 years ago. The drug laws, I am sure, were never meant to be discriminatory. Yet they are...@

Paul

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Next SENATE MEETING: Monday, 10:00 a.m., February 12, 2001.

Next HOUSE MEETING: Monday, 2:00 p.m., February 12, 2001.

OLA: S. Smith, J. Homanich